

## **Navy Directs \$28M To Anti-IED Work; Special Humvee To Be Unveiled**

The U.S. Navy has directed roughly \$28 million to support a "Manhattan-like" project to defend military personnel against improvised explosive devices (IED), including realigning 10% of the baseline budget, and 75 scientists, from the Office of Naval Research, the chief of naval research said March 24.

Rear Adm. Jay Cohen told the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space 2005 exposition in Washington that \$15 million in fiscal 2005 ONR resources have been devoted to counter-IED research and development, along with another \$12 million elsewhere in the Navy going to fund grants to universities and laboratories.

Specific focus areas include robots, IED electronic countermeasures, X-ray systems and specialized search dogs, Navy officials said. But the Defense Department-wide R&D effort - which Cohen compared to the four-year Manhattan Project to develop the first nuclear bombs - comes as Marines express disappointment with some proposed solutions currently from industry.

"Where I sit, the products don't deliver what they say they can deliver. In many occasions more money is needed for research to pull this off," said Marine Brig. Gen. Thomas Waldhauser, who spoke alongside Cohen.

"We've got to be very careful to see what these technologies can really do as opposed to what the PowerPoint slides say they can do," added Waldhauser, commander of the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory and vice chief of naval research.

A radio frequency technology aimed at countering IEDs recently suffered a test failure. A source told The DAILY on March 18 that a test of the Neutralizing IEDs with Radio Frequency (NIRF) program failed when the device essentially fried itself (DAILY, March 21).

DOD has issued an anti-IED broad agency announcement for \$55.5 million, including \$20 million for R&D, \$11 million for procurement, and \$4 million for operation and maintenance costs (DAILY, March 22). The March 2 BAA seeks capabilities in detecting, neutralizing and mitigating IEDs.

Meanwhile, Navy and Marine officials will drive a prototype up-armored Humvee on to Capitol Hill in June to show off state-of-the-art, anti-IED measures to lawmakers. The vehicle, called Ultra, was developed by Georgia Institute of Technology, with help from NASCAR, Ford Motor Co. and the Army. The prototype is supposed to represent

"everything" Navy and Marine researchers have learned about defending such a vehicle against the roadside bombs plaguing U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq.

-- *Michael Bruno*